

1. Number of virus cases crosses 1 lakh, fatality crosses 3100.
2. Oxford vaccine fails to shield monkey from Corona virus. It uses the common cold virus (adenovirus) that causes infections in chimpanzees and carries the genetic material of the novel Corona virus that makes the spike protein. The spike protein binds to human receptors on cell surfaces and infiltrates the lung cells.
3. Odisha and West Bengal brace for Amphan.
4. A rare palm endemic to the South Andaman Island is finding a second home at Palode here, courtesy the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI). An earlier JNTBGRI effort in this direction had been thwarted by mischievous wild elephants that ate up all the specimens! At first glance, *Pinanga andamanensis* — which at one point was written off as extinct — resembles the areca palm to which it is closely related. But its entire population of some 600 specimens naturally occurs only in a tiny, evergreen forest pocket in South Andaman's Mount Harriet National Park.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency of the United States federal government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance. With a budget of over \$27 billion, USAID is one of the largest official aid agencies in the world, and accounts for more than half of all U.S. foreign assistance—the highest in the world in absolute dollar terms.

Recently, the National Crisis Management Committee reviewed the preparedness for the impending cyclone Amphan.

At the national level, Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) are the key committees involved in the top-level decision-making related to Disaster Management.

Key Points

Cyclone Amphan (pronounced as UM-PUN) is a tropical cyclone formed over Bay of Bengal that has intensified and likely to turn into a “super cyclonic storm (maximum wind speed is 120 knots)”.

According to the India Meteorological Department forecast, it will make landfall as a very severe cyclone between the Sagar islands of West Bengal and the Hatiya islands of Bangladesh.

It has been named by Thailand.

Affected Regions: West Bengal, Odisha and Bangladesh.

Amphan is the second pre-monsoon cyclone to form in the Bay of Bengal in two years. The first one was Cyclone Fani. The pre-monsoon period is generally considered to be unsupportive for the formation of tropical cyclones.